

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 03004 090756Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY OSLO
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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT DA
SUBJECT: DANISH CABINET RESHUFFLE

SUMMARY: ERLING DINESEN, THE 66-YEAR OLD MINISTER OF LABOR
IS REPLACED TODAY BY ERLING JENSEN, THE PRESENT MINISTER OF
COMMERCE. THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, PER HAEKKERUP,
ASSUMES THE ADDITIONAL COMMERCE PORTFOLIO. THE NUMBER OF
CABINET MEMBERS THUS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE, TO FIFTEEN.
END SUMMARY.

1. ERLING DINESEN, WHO HAS HELD THE POST OF LABOR MINISTER
FOR MORE THAN A TOTAL OF EIGHT YEARS IN THREE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS, HAS WANTED TO STEP DOWN FOR SOME
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PAGE 02 COPENH 03004 090756Z

TIME BECAUSE OF FAILING HEALTH. HE WILL, HOWEVER,

RETAIN HIS PARLIAMENTARY SEAT. AS A FORMER TRADE UNION PRESIDENT, HE HAS BEEN WELL-SUITED FOR THE JOB AS THE GOVERNMENT'S GO-BETWEEN WITH THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. HIS PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN SOLID, IF A BIT COLORLESS.

2. JENSEN UNDOUBTEDLY WAS CHOSEN FOR THE LABOR POST BECAUSE OF HIS COMPETENCE. ROUND, JOVIAL, ARTICULATE AND A TOUGH NEGOTIATOR, HE IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF ACADEMICIANS IN THE CABINET. HE ALSO HAS GOOD CREDENTIALS WITH THE TRADE UNIONS AND FOR ELEVEN YEARS SERVED AS PRINCIPAL OF VARIOUS UNION SCHOOLS IN DENMARK.

3. JENSEN SAID PUBLICLY THAT HIS PRINCIPAL TASK IS TO REDUCE THE CONTINUING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. BUT AT LEAST OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, HE WILL HAVE TO UTILIZE EVERY ASSET HE CAN MUSTER TO DEAL WITH THE UNIONS WHICH ARE OPENLY CHALLENGING THE WAGE PARAMETERS LAID DOWN IN THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENTLY CONCLUDED ECONOMIC COMPROMISE.

4. IN ANNOUNCING HAEKKERUP'S ASSUMPTION OF THE COMMERCE POST, PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN USED THE TERM "FOR THE TIME BEING" AND LATER EXPLAINED THAT THIS MEANT "AT LEAST TO SPRING". THIS MIGHT INDICATE THAT JORGENSEN EXPECTS ELECTIONS AT THAT TIME.

5. HAEKKERUP, A FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, HAS LONG SERVED AS ONE OF THE PARTY'S CHIEF THEORETICIANS AND IS AMONG THE GOVERNMENT'S ABLEST MINISTER. HIS OWN HEALTH AT 60 IS NOT ROBUST, AND HE WILL BE TAXED IN DISCHARGING THE DUTIES OF TWO PORTFOLIOS.
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